

CLAIMS:

1. An ultrasound system, comprising:

an ultrasound probe, comprising

an ultrasonic transducer; and

a physical sensor adapted to sense engagement with a subject to be scanned by the ultrasonic transducer; and

a control system coupled to the ultrasound probe.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the control system is configured to control power modes of the ultrasound probe based on feedback from the physical sensor.
3. The system of claim 1, wherein the ultrasound probe comprises a hand holdable body.
4. The system of claim 3, wherein the hand holdable body comprises at least a portion of a beamformer.
5. The system of claim 1, wherein the physical sensor comprises a pressure sensor configured to detect a contact pressure with the subject.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the pressure sensor comprises a piezoelectric sensor element.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the physical sensor comprises a temperature sensor configured to detect thermal proximity with the subject.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the physical sensor comprises a manual power switch.

9. A method for controlling heat in an ultrasound system, the method comprising:

physically sensing engagement of an ultrasound module with a subject; and

switching power modes of the ultrasound module based on the sensed engagement.

10. The method of claim 9, comprising:

manually switching the power modes at a handheld unit of the ultrasound module.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein physically sensing engagement comprises detecting a contact pressure with the subject.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein physically sensing engagement comprises detecting thermal proximity of the subject.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein physically sensing engagement comprises detecting physical contact of a hand holdable probe of the ultrasound module with the subject.

14. The method of claim 9, wherein switching power modes comprises increasing power of the ultrasound module upon sensing engagement with the subject to enable ultrasonic scanning of the subject.

15. An ultrasound system, comprising:

a hand holdable ultrasound probe, comprising:

an ultrasonic transducer configured to scan a subject; and

a sensing element configured to detect physical proximity of the hand holdable ultrasound probe relative to the subject; and

a control system coupled to the hand holdable ultrasound probe, wherein the control system is configured to switch the ultrasound probe between a plurality of power modes based on feedback from the sensing element.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the sensing element comprises a pressure sensor configured to detect a contact pressure between the hand holdable ultrasound probe and the subject.

17. The system of claim 15, wherein the sensing element comprises a temperature sensor configured to detect a temperature differential between the hand holdable ultrasound probe and the subject.

18. A method of manufacture, comprising:

providing an ultrasound unit having an ultrasound transducer to scan a subject and a physical sensor to detect proximity of a subject relative to the ultrasound unit.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein providing the ultrasound unit comprises providing a hand holdable body having the ultrasound transducer, the physical sensor, and a beamformer coupled to the ultrasound transducer.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein providing the ultrasound unit comprises disposing a pressure sensor on the hand holdable body of the ultrasound unit.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein providing the ultrasound unit comprises disposing a temperature sensor on the hand holdable body of the ultrasound unit.

22. The method of claim 18, comprising providing a control system to change power levels of the ultrasound unit based on the feedback from the physical sensor.

23. An ultrasound system, comprising:

means for physically detecting proximity of an ultrasound module relative to a subject to be scanned by ultrasonic transducers of the ultrasound module; and

means for switching power modes the ultrasound probe based on proximity feedback from the means for physically detecting.